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IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A silicon nitride wear resistant member ~~composed~~ comprised of a ceramic sintered body ~~containing~~ comprising

55 to 75 mass% of silicon nitride,

12 to 28 mass% of silicon carbide,

3 to 15 mass% of at least one element selected from the group consisting of Mo, W, Ta, and Nb in terms of silicide thereof, and

5 to 15 mass% of grain boundary phase ~~composed~~ comprised of a rare earth element-Si-Al-O-N,

wherein the wear resistant member ~~having~~ has an electrical resistance of 10^7 to 10^4 Ω·cm,

a porosity of 1% or less, and

a three point bending strength of 900 MPa or more.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): [[A]] The silicon nitride wear resistant member according to Claim 1, wherein the wear resistant member has a fracture toughness of 6.0 $MPa \cdot m^{1/2}$ or more.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): [[A]] The silicon nitride type wear resistant member according to Claim 1, wherein the wear resistant member further ~~contains~~ comprises

5 mass% or less of at least one element selected from the group consisting of Ti, Hf, and Zr in terms of the oxide thereof.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): [[A]] The silicon nitride wear resistant member according to Claim 1, ~~one of Claims 1 to 3,~~ wherein a rolling ~~life~~ life, defined as a rotation number of steel balls rolling along a circular track formed on the wear resistant member formed of the silicon nitride sintered body until a surface of the silicon nitride wear resistant member peels ~~off~~ off, is 1×10^7 or more, ~~when~~

wherein the rolling life is measured ~~in such a manner that~~ by

setting a circular track having a diameter of 40 mm ~~is set~~ on the upper surface of the plate-shaped wear resistant member,

providing the three rolling steel balls each having a diameter of 9.525 mm and ~~composed~~ comprised of SUJ2 ~~are provided~~ on the circular track, thereby ~~to form~~ forming a thrust type bearing testing machine, and

rotating the rolling steel balls ~~are rotated~~ on the track at a rotation speed of 1200 rpm ~~under a condition of being applied with~~ while applying a load of 3.92 KN.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): [[A]] The silicon nitride wear resistant member according to Claim 1, ~~any one of Claims 1 to 3,~~ wherein the silicon nitride sintered body has a crush strength of 200 MPa or more, and a rolling fatigue ~~life~~ life, defined as a time until a surface of rolling balls ~~composed~~ comprised of the silicon nitride wear resistant member rolling along a circular track on a steel plate peels ~~off~~ off, is 400 hours or more, ~~when~~

wherein the rolling fatigue life is measured ~~in such a manner that~~ by forming three rolling balls each having a diameter of 9.525 mm ~~are formed~~ from the silicon nitride wear resistant member,

providing the three rolling balls ~~are provided~~ on the circular track having a diameter of 40 mm set on the upper surface of a steel plate formed of SUJ2, thereby ~~to form~~ forming a thrust type bearing testing machine, and

rotating the rolling ball ~~are rotated~~ at a rotation speed of 1200 rpm on the track ~~under a condition of being applied with~~ while applying a load ~~so as~~ to impact a maximum contact stress of 5.9 GPa to the balls.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): [[A]] The method of manufacturing a wear resistance member ~~composed~~ comprised of a silicon nitride sintered body, the method comprising: ~~comprising the steps of:~~

preparing a material mixture by adding

12 to 28 mass% of silicon nitride,

3 to 15 mass% of at least one compound selected from the group consisting of the carbides, the silicides, and the oxides of Mo, W, Ta, and Nb in terms of the silicide thereof,

2 to 10 mass% of a rare earth element in terms of the oxide thereof,

2 to 10 mass% of aluminum in terms of the oxide thereof, and

5 mass% or less of at least one element selected from the group consisting of Ti, Hf, and Zr in terms of oxide thereof

to silicon nitride powder comprising ~~containing~~ 1.7 mass% or less of oxygen and 90 mass% or more of α phase type silicon nitride, and having an average grain size of 0.1 μm or less;

molding the material mixture to form a compact;

degreasing the compact; and

sintering the compact in a non-oxidizing atmosphere at a temperature of 1850°C or lower.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): [[A]] The method of manufacturing a silicon nitride wear resistant member according to Claim 6, wherein the method further comprises: ~~comprising a step of~~

conducting a hot isostatic pressing treatment (HIP) in a non-oxidizing atmosphere of 30 MPa or more at a temperature of 1800°C or lower after said sintering. ~~completion of the sintering step.~~